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Page: 1

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PAGE 01
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9598

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E.O. 12065: XDS-1 2-23-09 (CASTRO, RAUL H.) OR-M
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: AMBASSADOR AND GENERAL VIOLA CONFER

1. AT A SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY GIVEN LAST NIGHT (FEB 22)
FOR LUIS SANTINI, ARGENTINA'S LEADING CHARACTER ACTOR, I RAN
INTO GENERAL VIOLA, JUANTA PRESIDENT AND ARMY COMMANDER.
BROKEN DOWN AND EMERGING ACTORS PREDOMINATED IN LAST NIGHT'S
GATHERING PLUS A SPRINKLING OF ARTISTS, POETS AND PHILOSOPHERS.
IN THIS EXOTIC AND EBULLIENT CROWD THERE WERE ONLY TWO
HAGGARD-LOOKING BUREAUCRATS -- GENERAL VIOLA AND I.

2. AFTER A FEW MINUTES OF SOCIALIZING I MANAGED TO SPRING
GENERAL VIOLA FROM THE CLUTCHES OF ONE OF HIS FAVORITE
ACTRESSES SO I COULD CONFER WITH HIM FOR A FEW MINUTES.
KEY POINTS COVERED FOLLOW:

3. SUSANA PANERO: THIS TWENTY-YEAR OLD HAS BEEN IN PRISON
FOR OVER FOUR YEARS. SHE IS A VERY HIGH INTEREST CASE
-- BOTH IN CONGRESS AND THE DEPARTMENT. VIOLA TOLD ME
SUSANA PANERO'S AUTHORIZATION TO LEAVE ARGENTINA HAS DEFINITELY
BEEN GRANTED. I ASKED HIM IF THIS MEANT IT WOULD TAKE
ONE WEEK FOR HER CELL DOOR TO OPEN. HE APOLOGIZED FOR
THE DELAY BUT STATED IT WOULD BE TOMORROW OR THE NEXT

PAGE 02 BUENOS 01502 231439Z

DAY. COMMENT: A MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SOURCE ALSO
TOLD US HER RELEASE IS IMMINENT.

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Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
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Page: 2

Channel: n/a

END COMMENT.

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4. GOA'S STATE OF AFFAIRS: I THEN INQUIRED ABOUT GOA'S STATE OF AFFAIRS. VIOLA REPLIED ENTHUSIASTICALLY "THE NATION WAS ON TRUE COURSE WITH AN ANTICIPATED RAPID INCREASE OF PROGRESS." I TOLD HIM I WAS PLEASED TO HEAR HIM SAY THAT, BUT HE HAD PROMISED THIS SO MANY TIMES THAT USG HAD BECOME SKEPTICAL TO WHAT SOUNDED LIKE PROMISES, PROMISES AND NO ACTION. HE AGREED HE HAD NOT ALWAYS HERETOFORE DELIVERED. VIOLA THEN REMINDED ME OF HAVING TOLD ME SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE OF NOT BEING ABLE TO WORK FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH. HE SAID NOW AT LONG LAST HE THOUGHT HE COULD FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH. I ASKED HIM WHAT ACCOUNTED FOR THIS CHANGE. HE SMILED AND REPLIED "THOSE MILITARY CHANGES AND ASSIGNMENTS HAVE GIVEN ME A POKER HAND FULL OF ACES."

5. LABOR UNREST: EVEN THOUGH VIOLA EXUDED CONFIDENCE, I CHALLENGED HIM ON POSSIBLE LABOR PROBLEMS IN THE MIDDLE OF MARCH. VIOLA CONFIRMED HIS HEARING RUMORS OF POSSIBLE LABOR UNREST IN MARCH. VIOLA MADE IT CLEAR GOA WAS READY FOR ANY STRIFE THAT MIGHT ENSUE AND WAS EXTREMELY CONFIDENT OF GOA'S ABILITY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM FAVORABLY.

6. GENERAL SUAREZ MASON: I THEN QUERIED VIOLA, WITHOUT MENTIONING NAMES, ABOUT HIS MILITARY OPPOSITION. HE IMMEDIATELY PICKED UP THE SIGNAL AND STATED HIS CHIEF OPPONENT WAS NOW WORKING NEAR HIM. VIOLA MADE THIS DIRECT QUOTE: "I BELIEVE I HAVE MATTERS UNDER CONTROL AND AM NOW IN A GOOD POSITION." EVEN THOUGH NAMES WERE NOT MENTIONED,

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 01502 231439Z

IT CAME OUT LOUD AND CLEAR HE WAS REFERRING TO GENERAL SUAREZ MASON. VIOLA SAID HE FELT STRONG- ENOUGH TO SUFFOCATE ANY INTERNAL OPPOSITION.

7. PRISONERS: VIOLA STATED IT WAS THEIR PLAN TO RELEASE AS MANY PRISONERS AS POSSIBLE WITHIN A SIX-MONTH TIME FRAME. HE INDICATED ONLY THE TOUGH, BOMB-THROWING SUBVERSIVE WOULD REMAIN IN PRISON. THESE WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE COURT AND CHARGES LODGED AGAINST THEM. HE MADE A CLEAR STATEMENT OF GOA'S INTENT TO RELEASE AS MANY PRISONERS AS POSSIBLE, WHETHER UNDER RIGHT OF OPTION OR JUST PLAIN, DIRECT RELEASES.
COMMENT: PRIOR TO LAST NIGHT'S MEETING, I ALWAYS HAD THE

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1979BUENOS01502

Page: 3

Channel: n/a

IMPRESSION VIOLA WAS SEEKING USG SYMPATHY AND WANTED PUBLIC
MANIFESTATION OF US SUPPORT OF THE VIDELA-VIOLA COMBINE. LAST
NIGHT I FOUND A DIFFERENT VIOLA. HE WAS CONFIDENT, PLEASANT
AND GAVE AN AIR OF TOTAL INDEPENDENCE. THIS TIME HE WAS NOT
SEEKING SYMPATHY BUT TO THE CONTRARY WANTED ME TO KNOW HE HAD
MATTERS UNDER CONTROL AND WAS GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
CASTRO

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Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 3

UNCLASSIFIED